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~~North America~~
~~1776~~
DECLARATION

BY THE

**Representatives of the United
Colonies of North-America,**

Now met in GENERAL CONGRESS at
PHILADELPHIA;

Setting forth the CAUSES and NECESSITY
of their taking up ARMS.



A L S O,

An ADDRESS

FROM THE

Twelve United Colonies,

By their DELEGATES in CONGRESS, to the
Inhabitants of GREAT-BRITAIN.

Philadelphia printed by Wm. and THO. BRADFORD,

and Bristol reprinted by W. PINE, 1776.

[Price TWO-PENCE.]

DECLARATION, &c.

IF it was possible for men, who exercise their reason to believe, that the divine Author of our existence intended a part of the human race to hold an absolute property in, and an unbounded power over others, marked out by his infinite goodness and wisdom, as the objects of a legal domination, never rightfully resistible, however severe and oppressive, the inhabitants of these colonies might at least require from the parliament of Great-Britain, some evidence, that this dreadful authority over them has been granted to that body. But a reverence for our great Creator, principles of humanity, and the dictates of common sense, must convince all those who reflect upon the subject, that government was instituted to promote the welfare of mankind, and ought to be administered for the attainment of that end. The legislature of Great-Britain, however stimulated by an inordinate passion for a power not only unjustifiable, but which they know to be peculiarly reprobated by the very constitution of that kingdom, and desperate of success in any mode of contest, where regard should be had to truth, law, or right, have at length, deserting those, attempted to effect their cruel and impolitic purpose of enslaving these colonies by violence, and have thereby rendered it necessary for us to close with their last appeal from reason to arms. Yet, however blinded that assembly may be, by their intemperate rage for unlimited domination, so to slight justice and the opinion of mankind, we esteem ourselves bound by obligations of respect to the rest of the world, to make known the justice of our cause.

Our forefathers, inhabitants of the island of Great-Britain, left their native land, to seek on these shores a residence for civil and religious freedom. At the expence of their blood, at the hazard of their fortunes, without the least charge to the country from which they removed, by unceasing labour, and an unconquerable spirit, they effected settlements in the distant and inhospitable wilds of America, then filled with numerous and warlike nations of barbarians. Societies or governments, vested with perfect legislatures, were formed under charters from

from the crown, and an harmonious intercourse was established between the colonies and the kingdom from which they derived their origin. The mutual benefits of this union became in a short time so extraordinary as to excite astonishment. It is universally confessed, that the amazing increase of the wealth, strength, and navigation of the realm, arose from this source; and the minister who so wisely and successfully directed the measures of Great-Britain in the late war, publicly declared, that these colonies enabled her to triumph over her enemies. Towards the conclusion of that war it pleased our sovereign to make a change in his counsel. From that fatal moment, the affairs of the British empire began to fall into confusion, and gradually sliding from the summit of glorious prosperity to which they had been advanced, by the virtues and abilities of one man, are at length distracted by the convulsions, that now shake it to its deepest foundations. The new ministry finding the brave foes of Britain, though frequently defeated, yet still contending, took up the unfortunate idea of granting them an hasty peace, and of then subduing her faithful friends.

These devoted colonies were judged to be in such a state as to present victories without bloodshed, and all the easy emoluments of statuteable plunder. The uninterrupted tenor of their peaceable and respectful behaviour from the beginning of colonization, their dutiful, zealous and useful services during the war, though so recently and amply acknowledged in the most honourable manner by his Majesty, by the late King, and by Parliament, could not save them from the meditated innovations. Parliament was influenced to adopt the pernicious project, and assuming a new power over them, have in the course of eleven years given such decisive specimens of the spirit and consequences attending this power, as to leave no doubt concerning the effects of acquiescence under it. They have undertaken to give and grant our money without our consent, though we have ever exercised an exclusive right to dispose of our own property; statutes have been passed for extending the jurisdiction of courts of Admiralty and Vice-Admiralty beyond their ancient limits; for depriving us of the accustomed and inestimable privilege of trial by jury, in cases affecting both life and property; for suspending the legislature of one of the colonies; for interfering all commerce of another; and for altering fundamentally the form of government established by charter, and secured by acts of its own legislature solemnly confirmed by

the crown; for exempting the "murderers" of colonists from legal trial, and in effect from punishment; for erecting in a neighbouring province, acquired by the joint arms of Great-Britain and America, a despotism dangerous to our very existence; and for quartering soldiers upon the colonists in time of profound peace. It has also been resolved in Parliament, that colonists charged with committing certain offences, shall be transported to England to be tried.

But why should we enumerate our injuries in detail? By one statute it is declared, that Parliament can "of right make laws to bind us IN ALL CASES WHATSOEVER." What is to defend us against so enormous, so unlimited a power? Not a single man of those who assume it is chosen by us; or is subject to our controul or influence: but on the contrary, they are all of them exempt from the operation of such laws, and an American revenue, if not diverted from the ostensible purposes for which it is raised, would actually lighten their own burdens in proportion as they increase ours. We saw the misery to which such despotism would reduce us. We for ten years incessantly and ineffectually besieged the throne as supplicants; we reasoned, we remonstrated with parliament in the most mild and decent language. But administration sensible that we should regard these oppressive measures as freemen ought to do, sent over fleets and armies to enforce them. The indignation of the Americans was roused it is true; but it was the indignation of a virtuous, loyal, and affectionate people. A Congress of Delegates from the united colonies was assembled at Philadelphia, on the fifth day of last September. We resolved again to offer an humble and dutiful petition to the King, and also addressed our fellow subjects of Great-Britain. We have pursued every temperate, every respectful measure; we have even proceeded to break off our commercial intercourse with our fellow-subjects, as the last peaceable admonition, that our attachment to no nation on earth should supplant our attachment to liberty. This, we flattered ourselves, was the ultimate step of the controversy: but subsequent events have shewn, how vain was this hope of finding moderation in our enemies.

Several threatening expressions against the colonies were inserted in his Majesty's speech; our petition, though we were told it was a decent one, that his Majesty had been pleased to receive it graciously, and to promise laying it before his parliament, was huddled into both houses amongst a bundle of American papers, and there neglected. The
 Lords,

Lords and Commons in their address, in the month of February, said, that "a rebellion at that time actually existed within the province of Massachusetts-bay; and that those concerned in it, had been countenanced and encouraged by unlawful combinations and engagements, entered into by his Majesty's subjects in several of the other colonies; and therefore they besought his Majesty, that he would take the most effectual measures to enforce due obedience to the laws and authority of the supreme legislature."—Soon after the commercial intercourse of whole colonies, with foreign countries and with each other, was cut off by an act of Parliament; by another, several of them were entirely prohibited from the fisheries in the seas near their coasts, on which they always depended for their sustenance; and large reinforcements of ships and troops were immediately sent over to General Gage.

Fruitless were all the entreaties, arguments and eloquence of an illustrious band of the most distinguished Peers and Commoners, who nobly and strenuously asserted the justice of our cause, to stay or even to mitigate the heedless fury with which these accumulated and unexampled outrages were hurried on.—Equally fruitless was the interference of the city of London, of Bristol, and many other respectable towns in our favour. Parliament adopted an insidious manœuvre calculated to divide us, to establish a perpetual auction of taxations where colony should bid against colony, all of them uninformed what ransom would redeem their lives, and thus to extort from us at the point of the bayonet, the unknown sums that should be sufficient to gratify, if possible to gratify, ministerial rapacity, with the miserable indulgence left to us of raising in our own mode the prescribed tribute. What terms more rigid and humiliating could have been dictated by remorseless victors to conquered enemies? In our circumstances to accept them would be to deserve them.

Soon after the intelligence of these proceedings arrived on this continent, General Gage, who, in the course of the last year, had taken possession of the town of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts-bay, and still occupied it as a garrison, on the 19th day of April, sent out from that place a large detachment of his army, who made an unprovoked assault on the inhabitants of the said province, at the town of Lexington, as appears by the affidavits of a great number of persons, some of whom were officers and soldiers of that

detachment, murdered eight of the inhabitants, and wounded many others. From thence the troops proceeded in war-like array to the town of Concord, where they set upon another party of the inhabitants of the same province, killing several and wounding more, until compelled to retreat by the country people suddenly assembled to repel this cruel aggression. Hostilities thus commenced by the British troops, have been since prosecuted by them without regard to faith or reputation.—The inhabitants of Boston being confined within that town by the General their Governor, and having in order to procure their dismissal, entered into a treaty with him, it was stipulated that the said inhabitants having deposited their arms with their own magistrates, should have liberty to depart, taking with them their other effects. They accordingly delivered up their arms, but in open violation of honor, in defiance of the obligation of treaties, which even savage nations esteem sacred, the Governor ordered the arms deposited as aforesaid, that they might be preserved for their owners, to be seized by a body of soldiers; detained the greatest part of the inhabitants in the town, and compelled the few who were permitted to retire, to leave their most valuable effects behind.

By this perfidy, wives are separated from their husbands, children from their parents, the aged and the sick from their relations and friends, who wish to attend and comfort them; and those who have been used to live in plenty, and even elegance, are reduced to deplorable distress.

The General further emulating his ministerial masters, by a proclamation bearing date on the 12th day of June, after venting the grossest falsehoods and calumnies against the good people of the colonies, proceeds to “declare them all either by name or description to be rebels and traitors, to supersede the course of the common law, and instead thereof to publish and order the use and exercise of the law martial.”—His troops have butchered our countrymen; have wontonly burnt Charles-Town, besides a considerable number of houses in other places; our ships and vessels are seized; the necessary supplies of provisions are intercepted, and he is exerting his utmost power to spread destruction and devastation around him.

We have received certain intelligence, that General Carleton, the Governor of Canada, is instigating the people of that province and the Indians to fall upon us; and we have but too much reason to apprehend, that schemes have been

been formed to excite domestic enemies against us. In brief, a part of these colonies now feels, and all of them are sure of feeling, as far as the vengeance of administration can inflict them, the complicated calamities of fire, sword and famine.—We are reduced to the alternative of chusing an unconditional submission to the tyranny of irritated ministers, or resistance by force.—The latter is our choice.—We have counted the cost of this contest, and find nothing so dreadful as voluntary slavery.—Honor, justice, and humanity forbid us tamely to surrender that freedom which we received from our gallant ancestors, and which our innocent posterity have a right to receive from us. We cannot endure the infamy and guilt of resigning succeeding generations to that wretchedness which inevitably awaits them, if we basely entail hereditary bondage upon them.

Our cause is just. Our union is perfect. Our internal resources are great, and if necessary, foreign assistance is undoubtedly attainable.—We gratefully acknowledge, as signal instances of the Divine favour towards us, that his Providence would not permit us to be called into this severe controversy, until we were grown up to our present strength, had been previously exercised in warlike operations, and possessed of the means of defending ourselves.—With hearts fortified with these animating reflections, we most solemnly, before God and the world declare, that exerting the utmost energy of those powers, which our beneficent Creator hath graciously bestowed upon us, the arms we have been compelled by our enemies to assume, we will, in defiance of every hazard, with unabating firmness and perseverance, employ for the preservation of our liberties, being with one mind resolved, to die freemen rather than to live slaves.

Left this declaration should disquiet the minds of our friends and fellow subjects in any part of the empire, we assure them, that we mean not to dissolve that union which has so long and so happily subsisted between us, and which we sincerely wish to see restored.—Necessity has not yet driven us into that desperate measure, or induced us to excite any other nation to war against them.—We have not raised armies with ambitious designs of separating from Great Britain, and establishing independent states.—We fight not for glory or for conquest. We exhibit to mankind the remarkable spectacle of a people attacked by unprovoked enemies, without any imputation, or even suspicion, of offence.

offence. They boast of their privileges and civilization, and yet proffer no milder conditions than servitude or death.—

In our own native land, in defence of the freedom that is our birthright, and which we ever enjoyed till the late violation of it—for the protection of our property, acquired solely by the honest industry of our fore-fathers and ourselves, against violence actually offered, we have taken up arms. We shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed shall be removed, and not before.

With an humble confidence in the mercies of the supreme and impartial Judge and Ruler of the universe, we most devoutly implore his divine goodness to conduct us happily through this great conflict, to dispose our adversaries to reconciliation on reasonable terms, and thereby to relieve the empire from the calamities of civil war.

By Order of CONGRESS,

JOHN HANCOCK, President.

Attested,

CHARLES THOMPSON, Secretary.

PHILADELPHIA, July 6th, 1775.

*The TWELVE UNITED COLONIES by their
Delegates in Congress, to the Inhabitants of Great-
Britain.*

FRIENDS, COUNTRYMEN, and BRETHREN !

BY these, and by every other appellation, that may designate the ties, which bind US to each other, we entreat your serious attention to this our second attempt, to prevent their dissolution.—Remembrance of former friendships,—pride in the glorious achievements of our common ancestors, and affection for the heirs of their virtues, have hitherto preserved our mutual connection.—But when that friendship is violated by the grossest injuries;—when the pride of ancestry becomes our reproach, and we are no otherwise allied than as tyrants and slaves, when reduced to the melancholy alternative of renouncing your favor, or our freedom—can we hesitate about the choice ? Let the spirit of Britons determine.

In a former Address, we asserted our Rights, and stated the injuries we had then received. We hoped, that the mention of our wrongs, would have roused that honest indignation,

tion, which has slept too long for your honor, or the welfare of the empire.—But we have not been permitted to entertain this pleasing expectation;—every day brought an accumulation of injuries, and the invention of the ministry has been constantly exercised, in adding to the calamities of your American Brethren.

After the most valuable right of legislation was infringed,—when the powers, assumed by your parliament, in which we are not represented, and from our local and other circumstances, cannot properly be represented, rendered our property precarious.—After being denied that mode of trial to which we have long been indebted for the safety of our Persons, and the preservation of our Liberties;—after being in many instances divested of those laws, which were transmitted to US, by our common Ancestors, and subjected to an arbitrary code, compiled under the auspices of Roman tyrants; after annulling those charters, which encouraged our predecessors to brave death and danger in every shape, on unknown seas, in deserts unexplored, amidst barbarous and inhospitable nations!—when, without the form of trial, without a public accusation, whole colonies were condemned!—their trade destroyed; their inhabitants impoverished.—When soldiers were encouraged to embrace their hands in the blood of Americans, by offers of impunity;—when new modes of trial were instituted for the ruin of the accused, where the charge carried with it the horrors of conviction;—when a despotic government was established in a neighbouring province, and its limits extended to every of our frontiers; we little imagined that any thing could be added to this black catalogue of unprovoked injuries;—but we have unhappily been deceived; and the late measures of the British ministry fully convince us, that their object is the reduction of these colonies to slavery and ruin.

To confirm this assertion, let us recal your attention to the affairs of America, since our last address;—let us combat the calumnies of our enemies—and let us warn you of the dangers that threaten you, in our destruction. Many of your fellow subjects, whose situation deprived them of other support, drew their maintenance from the sea; but the deprivation of our Liberty being insufficient to satisfy the resentment of our enemies, the horrors of famine were superadded, and a British parliament, who, in better times were the protectors of innocence and the patrons of humanity, have, without distinction of age or sex, robbed thousands of the food, which they

they were accustomed to draw from that inexhaustible source, placed in their neighbourhood by the benevolent Creator.

Another act of your legislature shuts our ports and prohibits our trade with any but those States, from whom the great law of self-preservation renders it absolutely necessary we should at present withhold our commerce.—But this act (whatever may have been its design) we consider rather as injurious to your opulence, than our interest.—All our commerce terminates with you; and the wealth we procure from other nations, is soon exchanged for your superfluities.—Our remittances must then cease with our trade; and our refinements with our affluence.—We trust however, that laws which deprive us of every blessing, but a foil that teems with the necessaries of life, and that liberty which renders the enjoyment of them secure, will not relax our vigour in their defence.

We might here observe on the cruelty and inconsistency of those, who, while they publicly brand us with reproachful and unworthy epithets, endeavour to deprive us of the means of defence, by their interpolation with foreign powers, and to deliver us to the lawless ravages of a merciless soldiery. But happily we are not without resources; and tho' the timid and humiliating applications of a British ministry should prevail with foreign nations, yet industry, prompted by necessity, will not leave us without the necessary supplies.

We could wish to go no further—and, not to wound the ear of humanity, leave untold those rigorous acts of oppression which are daily exercised in the town of Boston, did we not hope, that by disclaiming their deeds, and punishing the perpetrators, you would shortly vindicate the honour of the British name, and re-establish the violated laws of Justice.

That once populous, flourishing and commercial town is now garrisoned by an army sent, not to protect, but to enslave its inhabitants.—The civil government is overturned, and a military despotism erected upon its ruins.—Without law, without right, powers are assumed unknown to the constitution.—Private property is unjustly invaded.—The inhabitants daily subjected to the licentiousness of the soldiery, are forbid to remove in defiance of their natural rights, in violation of the most solemn compacts—Or if after long and wearisome solicitation, a pass is procured, their effects are detained, and even those who are most favoured, have no alternative but poverty or slavery. The distress of many thousand people, wantonly deprived of the necessaries of life, is a subject on which we would not wish to enlarge,

Yet

Yet we cannot but observe, that a British fleet (unjustified even by acts of your legislature) are daily employed in ruining our commerce, seizing our ships, and depriving whole communities of their daily bread. Nor will a regard for your honor, permit us to be silent, while British troops sullied your glory, by actions which the most inveterate enmity will not palliate among civilized nations; the wanton and unnecessary destruction of Charles-Town, a large, ancient, and once populous town, just before deserted by its inhabitants, who had fled to avoid the fury of your soldiery.

If you still retain those sentiments of compassion by which Britons have ever been distinguished—If the humanity which tempered the valour of our common ancestors, has not degenerated into cruelty, you will lament the miseries of their descendants.

To what are we to attribute this treatment? If to any secret principle of the constitution let it be mentioned—let us learn that the government we have long revered is not without its defects, and that while it gives freedom to a part, it necessarily enslaves the remainder of the empire. If such a principle exists, why for ages has it ceased to operate? Why at this time is it called into action? Can no reason be assigned for this conduct? Or must it be resolved into the wanton exercise of arbitrary power? And shall the descendants of Britons tamely submit to this—No Sir! We never will, while we revere the memory of our gallant and virtuous ancestors, we never can surrender those glorious privileges, for which they fought, bled, and conquered. Admit that your fleets could destroy our towns, and ravage our sea coasts;—these are inconsiderable objects, things of no moment, to men whose bosoms glow with the ardor of liberty—We can retire beyond the reach of your navy, and without any sensible diminution of the necessaries of life, enjoy a luxury which from that period you will want; **THE LUXURY OF BEING FREE.**

We know the force of your arms, and was it called forth in the cause of justice and your country, we might dread the exertion—But will Britons fight under the banners of tyranny? Will they counteract the labours, and disgrace the victories of their ancestors? Will they forge chains for their posterity? If they descend to this unworthy task, will their swords retain their edge, their arms their accustomed vigor?—Britons can never become the instruments of oppression,

pression, till they lose the spirit of freedom, by which alone they are invincible.

Our enemies charge us with sedition ; In what does it consist ? In our refusal to submit to unwarrantable acts of injustice and cruelty ? If so, shew us a period in your history, in which you have not been equally seditious ?

We are accused of aiming at Independence ; but how is this accusation supported ? By the allegations of your ministers, not by our actions.—Abused, insulted, and contemned, what steps have we pursued to obtain redress ? We have carried our dutiful petitions to the throne ;—we have applied to your justice for relief, we have retrenched our luxury and withheld our trade.

The advantages of our commerce were designed as a compensation for your protection : When you ceased to protect, for what were we to compensate ?

What has been the success of our endeavours ? The clemency of our sovereign is unhappily diverted ; our petitions are treated with indignity ; our prayers answered by insults. Our application to you remains unnoticed, and leaves us the melancholy apprehension, of your wanting either the will, or the powers, to assist us.

Even under these circumstances, what measures have we taken that betray a desire of independence ? Have we called in the aid of those foreign powers, who are the rivals of your grandeur ? When your troops were few and defenceless, did we take advantage of their distress and expel them our towns ? Or have we permitted them to fortify, to receive new aid and to acquire additional strength ?

Let not your enemies and ours persuade you, that in this we were influenced by fear or any other unworthy motive. The lives of Britons are still dear to us.—They are the Children of our Parents, an uninterrupted intercourse of mutual benefits had knit the bonds of friendship.—When hostilities were commenced, when on a late occasion we were wantonly attacked by your troops, though we repelled their assaults, and returned their blows, yet we lamented the wounds they obliged us to give ; nor have we yet learned to rejoice at a victory over Englishmen.

As we wish not to colour our actions, or disguise our thoughts ; we shall, in the simple language of truth, avow the measures we have pursued, the motives upon which we have acted, and our future designs.

When

When our late petition to the throne produced no other effect than fresh injuries, and votes of your legislature, calculated to justify every severity; when your fleets, and your armies, were prepared to wrest from us our property, to rob us of our liberties or our lives; when the hostile attempts of General Gage evinced his designs, we levied armies for our security and defence; when the powers vested in the governor of Canada, gave us reason to apprehend danger from that quarter; and we had frequent intimations, that a cruel, and savage enemy, was to be let loose upon the defenceless inhabitants of our frontiers; we took such measures as prudence dictated, as necessity will justify. We possessed ourselves of Crown-Point and Ticonderoga. Yet give us leave, most solemnly to assure you, that we have not yet lost sight of the object we have ever had in view; a reconciliation with you on constitutional principles; and a restoration of that friendly intercourse, which, to the advantage of both, we till lately maintained.

The inhabitants of this country apply themselves chiefly to agriculture and commerce. As their fashions and manners are similar to yours, your markets must afford them the conveniences and luxuries for which they exchange the produce of their labours. The wealth of this extended continent centers with you; and our trade is so regulated as to be subservient, only to your interest. You are too reasonable to expect that by taxes (in addition to this) we should contribute to your expence, to believe after diverting the fountain that the streams can flow with unabated force.

It has been said that we refuse to submit to the restrictions on our commerce. From whence is this inference drawn? Not from our words, we having repeatedly declared the contrary, and we again profess our submission to the several acts of trade and navigation passed before the year 1763, trusting nevertheless in the equity and justice of Parliament, that such of them as upon cool and impartial consideration, shall appear to have imposed unnecessary or grievous restrictions, will, at some happier period, be repealed or altered. And we cheerfully consent to the operation of such acts of the British Parliament, as shall be restrained to the regulation of our external commerce for the purpose of securing the commercial advantages of the whole empire to the mother country, and the commercial benefits of its respective members, excluding every idea of taxation internal or external, for raising a revenue on the subjects in America, without their consent.

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It is alledged that we contribute nothing to the common defence ; to this we answer, that the advantages which Great-Britain receives from the monopoly of our trade, far exceeds our proportion of the expence necessary for that purpose. But should these advantages be inadequate thereto, let the restrictions on our trade be removed, and we will chearfully contribute such proportion when constitutionally required.

It is a fundamental principle of the British constitution, that every man should have at least a representative share in the formation of those laws by which he is bound. Were it otherwise, the regulation of our internal police by a British Parliament, who are, and ever will be unacquainted with our local circumstances, must be always inconvenient, and frequently oppressive, working our wrong, without yielding any possible advantage to you.

A plan of accommodation (as it has been absurdly called) has been proposed by your ministers to our respective assemblies. Were this proposal free from every other objection but that which arises from the time of the offer, it would not be unexceptionable. Can men deliberate with the bayonet at their breast? Can they treat with freedom while their towns are sacked; when daily instances of injustice and oppression, disturb the slower operations of reason?

If this proposal is really such as you should offer, and we accept, why was it delayed till the nation was put to useless expence, and we were reduced to our present melancholy situation?

If it holds forth nothing why was it proposed? Unless indeed to deceive you into a belief that we were unwilling to listen to any terms of accommodation: but what is submitted to our consideration? we contend for the disposal of our property; we are told that our demand is unreasonable, that our assemblies may indeed collect our money, but that they must at the same time offer, not what your exigencies or ours may require, but so much as shall be deemed sufficient to satisfy the desires of a minister, and enable him to provide for favourites and dependants. (A recurrence to your own treasury will convince you how little of the money already extorted from us has been applied to the relief of your burthens.) To suppose that we would thus grasp the shadow, and give up the substance, is adding insult to injuries.

We have nevertheless again presented an humble and dutiful petition to our Sovereign: and to remove every imputation of obstinacy, have requested his Majesty to direct some mode,

mode, by which the united applications of his faithful colonists may be improved into a happy and permanent reconciliation. We are willing to treat on such terms as can alone render an accommodation lasting, and we flatter ourselves; that our pacific endeavours will be attended with a removal of the troops, a repeal of those laws, of the operation of which we complain on the one part, and a dissolution of our army and commercial associations on the other.

Yet conclude not from this that we propose to surrender our property into the hands of your ministry, or vest your Parliament with a power which may terminate in our destruction. The great bulwarks of our constitution we have desired to maintain by every temperate, by every peaceable means; but your ministers, (equal foes to British and American freedom,) have added to their former oppressions an attempt to reduce us by the sword to a base and abject submission. On the sword therefore we are compelled to rely for protection. Should victory declare in your favour, yet men trained to arms from their infancy and animated by the love of liberty, will afford neither a cheap or easy conquest. Of this at least we are assured, that our struggle will be glorious, our success certain, since even in death we shall find that freedom which in life you forbid us to enjoy.

Let us now ask what advantages are to attend our reduction? the trade of a ruined and desolated country is always inconsiderable, its revenue trifling; the expence of subjecting and retaining it in subjection certain and inevitable. What then remains but the gratifications of an ill-judged pride, or the hope of rendering us subservient to designs on your liberty.

Soldiers who have sheathed their swords in the bowels of their American brethren, will not draw them with more reluctance against you, when too late you may lament the loss of that freedom, which we exhort you, while still in your power, to preserve.

On the other hand should you prove unsuccessful; should that connection which we most ardently wish to maintain be dissolved; should your ministers exhaust your treasures; waste the blood of your countrymen in vain attempts on our liberty; do they not deliver you, weak and defenceless, to your natural enemies?

Since then your *liberty* must be the price of your victories, your ruin of your defeat, What blind fatality can urge you to a pursuit destructive of all that Britons hold dear?

If

If you have no regard to the connection that has for ages subsisted between us; if you have forgot the wounds we received fighting by your side, for the extension of the empire; if our commerce is an object below your consideration; if justice and humanity have lost their influence on your hearts, still motives are not wanting to excite your indignation at the measures now pursued: your wealth, your honour, your liberty are at stake.

Notwithstanding the distress to which we are reduced, we sometimes forget our own afflictions to anticipate and sympathize in yours. We grieve that rash and inconsiderate councils should precipitate the destruction of an empire, which has been the envy and admiration of ages; and call God to witness, that we would part with our property, endanger our lives, and sacrifice every thing but liberty to redeem you from ruin.

A cloud hangs over your heads and ours; e'er this reaches you, it may probably have burst upon us; let us then (before the remembrance of former kindness is obliterated) once more repeat those appellations which are ever grateful in our ears. Let us entreat heaven to avert our ruin, and the destruction that threatens our friends, brethren, and countrymen, on the other side of the Atlantic.

By Order of the CONGRESS.

JOHN HANCOCK, President.

Attested by

CHARLES THOMSON, Secretary.

Philadelphia, July 8, 1775.

